

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Mason-Tillet House

other names/site number Rock Hill VDHR No. 012-0093

**2. Location**

street & number 1050 Christanna Highway not for publication  
city or town Valentines vicinity  
state Virginia code VA county Brunswick code 025 Zip 23887

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_ statewide x locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Virginia Department of Historic Resources**

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the  
National Register

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

**U. S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**Mason-Tillet House**  
**Brunswick County, VA**

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property** (Check as many boxes as apply)

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_x_ private
___ public-local
___ public-State
___ public-Federal
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**Category of Property** (Check only one box)

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_x_ building(s)
___ district
___ site
___ structure
___ object

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### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**N/A**

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: \_\_\_\_\_DOMESTIC\_\_\_\_\_ Sub: \_\_\_\_\_single dwelling\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: _____	Sub: _____
_____ DOMESTIC _____	_____ single dwelling _____
_____ DOMESTIC _____	_____ secondary structure (garage) _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)\_\_\_\_\_ EARLY REPUBLIC, Federal \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation \_\_\_\_\_ Brick \_\_\_\_\_

roof \_\_\_\_\_ asphalt \_\_\_\_\_

walls \_\_\_\_\_ weatherboard \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

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**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

\_\_\_\_ ARCHITECTURE \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ RELIGION \_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance** \_\_\_\_ Ca. 1780—1953 \_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates** \_\_\_\_ 1785 \_\_\_\_

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation** \_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder** \_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file** (NPS)

\_\_\_\_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

\_\_\_\_ previously listed in the National Register

\_\_\_\_ previously determined eligible by the National Register

\_\_\_\_ designated a National Historic Landmark

\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

\_\_X\_\_ State Historic Preservation Office

\_\_\_\_ Other State agency

\_\_\_\_ Federal agency

\_\_\_\_ Local government

\_\_\_\_ University

\_\_\_\_ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** \_\_\_\_ 4.38 \_\_\_\_

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
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1	17	249.094.45	4.048,310.48	2	____	____	____
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3	____	____	____	4	____	____	____
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\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title: Margaret T. Peters, consultant; John G. Zehmer, VDHR

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Virginia Department of Historic Resources \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_ June 10, 2003 \_\_\_\_\_

street & number: \_\_\_\_\_ 2801 Kensington Avenue \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_ (804)367-2323 \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ Richmond \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ VA \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_ 23221 \_\_\_\_\_

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs. Caroline Long Tillet \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ 1050 Christanna Highway \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ Valentines \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ VA \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_ 23887 \_\_\_\_\_

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**7. Description:**

**Summary Description:** The Mason-Tillet House in Brunswick County, Virginia, is a T-shaped, two-story frame structure with interesting detailing and finishes. Its unusual plan results from the addition of a one-and-a-half story addition to the existing two-story house containing only two rooms on the first floor. When the addition was made the stair was extended so that it rises from the large hall of the addition. The other uncommon feature is that there are two front doors, side by side, each one serving one of the two first-floor front rooms. The most interesting feature of the building is the survival of ornamental painting including outstanding examples of false graining and marbledizing. The house sits in a large yard with views of fields and woods.

**Exterior Description:** The two-story late 18<sup>th</sup>-century main section has two first-floor rooms, one of which contains an enclosed stair. Each of these rooms has its own front and back door. Side-by-side exterior doors are a rarity, but found occasionally in areas along the Virginia-North Carolina border. On the second floor are two rooms separated by a narrow hall containing the stair.

About 1830 a two-room, one-and-a-half-story addition was made to the north side (rear) of the house. One room is a hall into which the two original back doors now open. It also has a door into the other new room, a parlor trimmed with late federal detailing. At the same time, the original stair was changed by the elimination of winders at the base and the continuation of the flight down into the new north hall. A small winding stair in a corner of the new parlor connects it to the room above. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century a door was cut between the second-floor hall of the original section and the second floor of later section. The only other changes to the plan are the following additions: a shed roofed wing off the east end of the main section, a shed room along the north wall of the rear section, the creation of a small bathroom in a corner of the hall and another in the room above it.

The front section of the house is very tall. It retains much of its original beaded siding. The main (south) façade has a two-story porch that is a reconstruction of one shown in old photographs. It has simple posts, square in section, with cornice caps. It shelters the pair of doors that open separately into each of the first floor rooms. The porch is slightly off-center with windows filling two bays on each floor on the south side and one bay on the north. The first-floor windows have nine-over-nine

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sash and those on the second floor have six-over-nine. All have molded sills and much of the glass is original. Each end elevation of the front section has a tall single-shouldered chimney laid in Flemish bond. The one on the west side has a large diamond in glazed headers just below the beginning of the shoulders and a single diagonal row of headers parallel to each weathering. The weatherings are finished with flat pavers. The east chimney is of similar shape and has the flat paved weatherings, but has no decorative patterning in its Flemish bond. The only windows in either end elevation occur in the front bay on the first-floor level and have the same nine-over-nine sash as the rest of the first floor windows in that section.

The rear wing sits perpendicular to the main block. The room adjoining the main block is an almost square unheated hall. Both exterior walls have center doors set between tangent six-over-six windows that sit at the same height as the transom over the door. The solid-void configuration of the outer walls must have been particularly pleasing before the addition of a shed room along the east wall. With all the windows and doors open in the summer this must have been a very bright cool space. The parlor room north of the hall is served by a Flemish bond double-shouldered end chimney with stepped weatherings. On each slope of the roof are three gable-roofed dormers with four-over-four sash and cheeks finished with diagonal flush sheathing. Rectangular openings in the foundation of the building have wooden bars square in section. In the main block the bars are set vertically, in the rear wing they are set horizontally.

Interior Description: The two main-floor rooms in the original section of the house have plain unpaneled wainscot and doors and windows trimmed in simple two-part architraves. The fireplace in the parlor (west room) has a large opening with a segmental arched head. Above the arch is a broad flat panel framed by narrow vertical panels. A simple cornice shelf runs across the top and breaks out over the flanking vertical panels. The mantel and wainscot feature decorative painting schemes that are some of the most significant examples found in Virginia. The rail and baseboard of the wainscot have simple horizontal brushwork, but the dado features exuberant swirls similar to naïve marbleizing, in a form resembling giant oyster shells. Each swirl is the full height of the dado. The mantel is finished in more conventional marbleizing, with the large central panel painted in long continuous strokes as if it were one large piece of marble. To the right of the mantel is a book case in a shed closet next to the chimney.

In the dining room the wainscot has been repainted and so, in a way, has the mantel. The original mantel was stolen by vandals but the present owners cleverly "repainted" it on the bare plaster in

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a minimal trompe l'oeil version. The staircase takes up some of the dining room floor space. The steps originally rose by way of winders from the parlor. When the back section of the house was constructed, the winders were removed and the stair extended straight down into the new hall.

The hall is a most unusual room. If so much original material did not survive, one would be tempted to think it a modern addition. The arrangement of a center door with transom, flanked by abutting windows in line with the top of the transom is an unusual, if not unique treatment. With the openings on the east and west walls, the room must have been a cool refuge in the summer. Likewise with the doors closed in winter it provided a sort of air lock for the adjacent rooms. It is very simply detailed with six-panel doors and plain wainscot.

Behind the hall is a parlor with its more elaborate woodwork. The door and window cases are framed with reeded pilasters that support simplified entablatures consisting of a narrow architrave under a frieze featuring narrow vertically reeded blocks on which rests a horizontally reeded cornice shelf. These elements retain most of the original painted finishes. The door has light wood graining with half-sunburst patterns in the lowest pair of its six panels. The baseboards have conventional marbleizing and the rest that survives appears to be imitating a light wood, possibly oak. The mantel in this room was also stolen, but has been replaced with a new one based on the original.

The upstairs rooms are very simply furnished with plaster walls, beaded boards for chair rails and simple mantels. The railing at the top of the small stair in the rear section is square in section, supported by flat slats and has a square newel post topped by stepped pyramidal moldings. Floors throughout the house are mostly original as are the doors and windows.

The house sits on a relatively level site. There is a large yard with a 20<sup>th</sup>-century pond beyond the yard to the south. Numerous boxwood remain marking the site of an earlier garden.

A noncontributing one-story frame garage with a side shed addition stands about 100 feet northwest of the house. It is about 25 years old.



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**Statement of Significance**

**Summary Statement of Significance**

Mason's, Long's Farm, Brunswick Plantation, the Mason-Tillet House or Rock Hill, as it came to be known in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, located on Beddingfield Creek in the Valentine's vicinity of Brunswick County, Virginia, is significant as an important late 18<sup>th</sup>-century dwelling with exceptional surviving interior grained and marbleized woodwork and an unusual physical plan. It is also significant as the probable location of the First Session of the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1785.<sup>1</sup> The conference was led by Bishop Francis Asbury, the founder of the Methodist Church in Virginia. Moreover, that conference was the occasion for substantial debate regarding the Methodist support of abolition of slavery. The heated debate between a Colonel Bedford and the leading Methodist abolitionist, Thomas Coke, led ultimately to the filing by the Conference of a petition to the Virginia General Assembly supporting abolition of slavery throughout the Commonwealth.<sup>2</sup> Other important residents include Thomas Williams Mason, son of Nathaniel and Temperance Mason, born and raised at Mason's, who served in the Confederate Army from North Carolina and later in both legislative chambers of North Carolina. He served as a judge in Northampton County, North Carolina and was an unsuccessful Democratic candidate for the United State Senate from North Carolina.<sup>3</sup> The house also derives substantial significance from the ownership of the property remaining in the same family from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.

**Criteria Statement:** Because of its importance in the founding of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America (now the United Methodist Church), the house is eligible under Criterion A in the area of religion. Its unusual architectural evolution and the survival of important painted decorative features make the house eligible under Criterion C for architecture.

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The Mason-Tillet House stands on a large tract of land between Beddingfield Creek and Mason's Creek on the east side of Virginia State Route 46 just north of the North Carolina line in southern Brunswick County, Virginia. Physical evidence suggests that the original core of the house dates to the fourth quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with a rear addition dating to 1832. Ownership of the house and its surrounding acreage has remained in the Mason-Tillet family since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Although the land records for the 18<sup>th</sup>-century ownership of the property are somewhat confusing, it appears that members of the Mason family owned large tracts of land in this area as early as the 1770s.<sup>4</sup> The land on which this dwelling stands likely belonged to William Mason, whose name first appears in Bishop Francis Asbury's Journal in 1775. A map accompanying that journal, which was published after Asbury's death in 1815, shows the name "Mason" in this area. On November 2, 1775, Asbury wrote, "By the good providence of God, I entered Brunswick circuit at the house of Mrs. "M"." The explanatory note with this entry indicates that Mason, who was one of the earliest Virginia Methodists, erected Mason's Chapel in Brunswick County.<sup>5</sup> There is no specific date given for the building of the chapel, but since William Mason was deceased by 1791 it presumably would have pre-dated 1790. It can also be assumed that the chapel was built on William Mason's land. An archaeological report suggests that the site was just to the west of Route 46, but there is no definitive documentation for the chapel having been there; the map with Asbury's Journal clearly locates "Mason's" and presumably the chapel, on the east side of the main road, (Route 46) that ran from Lawrenceville, the county seat, to the North Carolina line.<sup>6</sup>

Complicating the issue is that Land Tax books for Brunswick County show that a William Mason was deceased by 1782. There are no recorded wills for "William" Mason either Senior or Junior in Brunswick, but it may have been that Captain William Mason who died ca. 1791 was son or at least heir to William Mason, Sr., who died before 1782.

Asbury's Journal of April 30, 1785, states "I am in much better health – my sickness, was made a blessing to me. Rode to W. Mason's where we are to meet in conference..."<sup>7</sup> Asbury's reference to a W. Mason may have been to William, Sr., (by then deceased) or to his son, William.

William Mason, Jr., also died intestate and, according to family history, had no children. His  
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land, along with this building appears to have passed to his brother, Nathaniel Mason. The tax records for 1788 show that the land of William Mason, Jr., was taxed at an elevated rate

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compared to other parcels in the area, indicating that there likely were substantial improvements on the tract. The tax books for 1788 and 1790 show that William and Nathaniel each had approximately 1300 acres that included tracts of 900 and 906 acres. One can speculate that William, Jr., and Nathaniel were brothers who inherited equal-size tracts from their father William, Sr. A possible third brother, Joseph, also is charged with about 900 acres. Nathaniel was charged with 1246 and William with 1300 acres.<sup>8</sup> By 1791, William's name is crossed out on the tax books, and by 1794 Nathaniel is listed as "deceased." Fortunately Nathaniel, Sr.'s will survives and through it we see that Nathaniel Sr. was survived by his wife, Judith and six children – Polly, Elizabeth, William Littlebury, Frances, David, and Nathaniel, Jr.<sup>9</sup> His inventory included ten horses and four named slaves. Judith lived until 1827 when in her will she left all her household furniture to Nathaniel, Jr. The tax books indicate that all the tracts she had held as a life estate from her husband Nathaniel, Sr., passed to Nathaniel, Jr., including improvements of \$800 for buildings. Nathaniel was named executor for her estate.<sup>10</sup> Nathaniel, Jr., married Nancy Trotter in 1807.<sup>11</sup> He later married Temperance Arrington who was mother to Thomas Williams Mason (1830-1921).

It is clear from Bishop Francis Asbury's Journal that William Mason's home was the site of the first session of the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1785, just one year after the formal organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784. Prior to 1784, Methodism was considered a part of the Church of England. The noted Anglican priest, Devereaux Jarrett, based in neighboring Dinwiddie County, had encouraged the Methodists to be a low church arm of the established church and championed their cause. He remained with the new Protestant Episcopal Church founded in the same year as the new Methodist Episcopal Church. The Virginia Conference was one of the original six conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It represented portions of both Virginia and North Carolina. The numbering of conference sessions is premised on this gathering in Virginia being the first. Bishop Frances Asbury presided over the conference that ran from May 1-4, 1785.<sup>12</sup>

One of the most contentious issues facing Methodists was slavery. Bishop Asbury commented on the debate at the meeting held at William Mason's home, saying: "I found the minds of the people greatly agitated with our rules against slavery, and a proposed petition to the general assembly for the emancipation of the blacks. Colonel Bedford and Doctor (John) Coke disputed on the subject and the Colonel used some threats; next day, brother O'Kelly let fly at them, and

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they were made angry enough; we, however, came off with whole bones, and our business in conference was finished in peace."<sup>13</sup>

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Of all the religious denominations, other than the Quakers, the Methodists in their early years took the strongest stand against slavery. According to one historian writing for the Virginia Methodist Heritage Magazine, John Wesley, the father of Methodism, said in his "General Rules of 1743" that the buying and selling of men and women with the intent of enslaving them would be prohibited. In 1774, likely influenced by Anthony Benezet an American Quaker, Wesley wrote *Thoughts on Slavery* in which he pronounced strong opposition to slavery. In 1778, Asbury proclaimed that Methodists should work to free slaves, just as the Quakers had done and, in 1783, "another enactment gave all local preachers one year in which to get rid of their slaves." The 1784 American Methodist Conference in Baltimore "decreed that all Methodists had one year in which to make plans for the release of their slaves, and it provided that any who had not done so at the end of the year would not be permitted to take the Lord's Supper. Virginians were given an extra year to implement this decree. Thomas Coke, a Methodist preacher, toured around Virginia preaching against slavery and faced considerable opposition.<sup>14</sup> It was he who argued so forcefully at Mason's house in Brunswick County in 1785. Apparently a petition which was supported by the Brunswick Methodists was submitted to the Virginia General Assembly on November 8, 1785 which said in part: "A petition of sundry persons...that they are firmly persuaded that it is contrary to the fundamental principles of the Christian religion to keep considerable number of our fellow creatures as the negroes in this state in slavery...that it is in express violation of the principles upon which our government is founded, and that a general emancipation of them, under certain restrictions would greatly contribute to strengthen it [the government] by attaching them by ties of interest and gratitude to its[government] support."<sup>15</sup> However, there is an another petition filed just two days later presumably from other citizens of Brunswick County expressing explicit opposition to the earlier petition calling for emancipation.<sup>16</sup> Another petition from Brunswick County filed November 9, 1785, is unclear as to its subject, but one of the legible phrases is "contrary to the gospel and the bill of rights..." which may have been referring to the issue of slavery as well.<sup>17</sup> These petitions clearly point to the strenuous debate about the subject both among the Methodists and the citizens of Brunswick County.

Because official opposition to slavery by various religious denominations in Virginia faded as the new century dawned, this documented sentiment of one of the most powerful dissenting

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protestant groups is particularly significant. That a gathering specifically documented by Bishop Asbury himself, clearly illustrating the powerful emotional sentiments on both sides of the issue took place in this home of William Mason points to the central role of the Brunswick Conference

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in the early history of Methodism in this part of Virginia and North Carolina.

The Mason-Tillet House served as home to Judith Mason and subsequently her son from 1795 until her death in 1827. Personal property records for 1801 suggest that Judith, widow of Nathaniel Mason, Sr., who lived more than 30 years after her husband's death, was an invalid, as the records indicate among her personal property a "wheel chair,"<sup>18</sup> an item rarely found in late 18<sup>th</sup>- or 19<sup>th</sup>-century tax records. The property continued as the home plantation of Nathaniel Mason, Jr., and his family until his death in 1868. During that time period, substantial improvements with a rear addition were made ca. 1832.<sup>19</sup> There is a record of Nathaniel Mason being issued an ordinary license in 1821, but there is no proof that he operated an ordinary at this site. When his mother died in 1827, Nathaniel consolidated two parcels of land, each with \$800 worth of improvements. Both parcels are described as being approximately 20 miles southeast of the courthouse, on Beddingfield creek and extending to the North Carolina line.

Nathaniel Mason, Jr.'s son, Thomas Williams Mason, was born at this plantation in 1830. He later moved to Longview Plantation, his wife Elizabeth Gray's family home in Garysburg, Northampton County, North Carolina, only a few miles away. Thomas Williams Mason attended the University of North Carolina and studied law at the University of Virginia. He was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Confederate forces, and saw action at Sharpsburg, Boone's Mill, and Richmond. He served terms in both houses of the North Carolina legislature and was an unsuccessful candidate for the United States Senate in 1894 and for the lieutenant governor's office in 1896.<sup>20</sup> This property, which the Mason family referred to as "the Brunswick Plantation" was used as a summer retreat by the Mason and Long families until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Mason-Tillet House passed to Betty Gray Mason Long, one of Thomas Williams Mason's three daughters who survived to adulthood. Her son Willie Jones Long inherited the property from his grandfather in 1921 and it passed to his son W. J. Long, Jr. in 1951. In 1978, ownership passed to W. J. Long, Jr.'s sister, Caroline Long Tillet, who with her husband restored the house.

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**Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Mason-Tillet House is identified as parcel number 102-17A on the tax parcel maps for Brunswick County, Virginia.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary for the Mason-Tillet House includes the house and 4.38 acres historically associated with the property.

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**PHOTO LIST**

The following information is common to all photographs:

Subject: Mason-TilletHouse

Location: Brunswick County, Virginia

VA DHR file number 012-0093

VA DHR negative number: 20578

Negatives filed: Va. Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia.

Date of photographs: January 23, 2003

Photographer: John G. Zehmer

- 1 of 11: Main façade
- 2 of 11: West side
- 3 of 11: North end
- 4 of 11: East side
- 5 of 11: View of parlor
- 6 of 11: Marbleized wainscot in parlor
- 7 of 11: West wall of hall (entrance)
- 8 of 11: View of stair and two front rooms from hall
- 9 of 11: Detail of woodwork in rear parlor
- 10 of 11: False grained door in rear parlor
- 11 of 11: Newel post at top of second-floor stair in rear section

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Mason-Tillet House  
Brunswick County, VA

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<sup>1</sup> Virginia Conference, United Methodist Church, "Historical Statement...Some Landmark Dates of the Conference," [www.vaumc.org/Journal/Historical](http://www.vaumc.org/Journal/Historical); *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, London and Nashville: 1958, Volume I (1771-1793), [edited by Elmer T. Clark, Editor in Chief, J. Manning Potts, and Jacob S. Payton], 488.

<sup>2</sup> *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, Volume I, 488 and fn # 36; Virginia General Assembly Journals (1783-1789) Unit 2, 25, November 8, 1785.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Williams Mason Papers Inventory, # 5004, "Descriptive Summary," "Biographical Note," Chapel Hill, N.C.: Library of the University of North Carolina, Manuscripts Department.

<sup>4</sup> Index to Brunswick County Deeds (1741-1783); Brunswick County Land Tax Records (1782-1799)

<sup>5</sup> *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, Volume I, 488.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 177.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Entry for Saturday, April 30, 1785. 488.

<sup>8</sup> Brunswick County Land Tax Book B, 1790.

<sup>9</sup> Brunswick County Will Book 5, 543.

<sup>10</sup> Brunswick County Will Book 10, 468 (1828)

<sup>11</sup> Brunswick County Marriage Bonds, 1807

<sup>12</sup> Virginia Conference, United Methodist Church, "Historical Statement," [www.vaumc.org/Journal/Historical](http://www.vaumc.org/Journal/Historical), 1-2. May 1, 1785 First Session of the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church held at home of William Mason in Brunswick County.

<sup>13</sup> Asbury Journal, 488.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Armour, "The Virginia Reaction to the Anti-Slavery Position of the Methodists During the Eighteenth Century," *Virginia Methodist Heritage Magazine*, Volume 2, # 2 (Fall, 1974) 12-13.

<sup>15</sup> Virginia General Assembly Journals, 1783-1789, Unit 2, 25 (November 8, 1785).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. November 10, 1785.

<sup>17</sup> Virginia General Assembly Journals, Box 39, Folder 19 (November 9, 1785).

<sup>18</sup> Brunswick County Personal Property Tax Book, 1801.

<sup>19</sup> Brunswick County Land Tax Book B, 1833.

<sup>20</sup> Abstract from the Southern Historical Collections, Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill).